

KING COUNTY CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2003

COMMISSIONERS

Christine Landon, Vice-Chair	District 1
Mario Morales	District 2
Kris Meilahn	District 3
Barbara Hurst	District 4
	District 5
	District 6
Kim Nguyen	District 7
•	District 8
Antonio P. Cube, Sr.	District 9
Hubert Sims, Chair	District 10
	District 11
	District 12
	District 13
Alice Griffin	At-Large
Steve Saunders	At-Large
	At-Large
	Kris Meilahn Barbara Hurst Kim Nguyen Antonio P. Cube, Sr. Hubert Sims, Chair Alice Griffin

The King County Civil Rights Commission was established in December, 1995 to take a strong leadership role in raising community awareness and involvement on civil rights issues and to advise the King County Executive and County Council on matters related

to the County's civil rights programs. Its primary goal is to ensure equal opportunity for all through the effective enforcement of anti-discrimination ordinances and implementation of the County's civil rights programs. The Commission works in collaboration with a variety of interest groups including community, business, civic, and religious organizations.

There are up to sixteen Commission members each serving three-year terms. County Council members representing each of the King County Council districts nominate thirteen members, while the remaining three serve as at-large members, selected by the County Executive. All Commission members are confirmed by the County Council and serve without pay. It is the goal of the County to recruit people from diverse ethnic and protected group backgrounds. The Commission seeks representation from the African American, Asian American, Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, Caucasian, Gay and Lesbian, and Disability communities. Commissioners reside within King County.

As the County's citizen advisory commission on civil rights, the KCCRC is responsible for reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness and progress of the County's affirmative action, non-discrimination enforcement, and minority/women business utilization programs. It is also responsible for educating the public and concerned groups on methods to prevent and eliminate discrimination and advise King County government on human and civil rights issues. The Commission periodically issues formal reports on its findings and makes formal presentations before the King County Council on a semi-annual basis. The ordinance creating the Commission also established four standing committees through which most of the work of the Commission is accomplished. The committees are Executive, Public Policy, Economic Development, and Community Relations.

The Executive Committee "performs administrative oversight activities of the commission, including representing the commission, conducting business outside of regular commission meetings, and performing other relating and necessary activities in the interest of ensuring an effective County human and civil rights commission." K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (A).

The Public Policy Committee "shall review and make recommendations on legislation, public rules and/or policies related to any of the County's equal opportunity, affirmative action, disability access and minority and women's business utilization programs." K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (B).

The Economic Development Committee "reviews and makes recommendations for enhancing opportunities for utilization and participation of minority and women businesses on County contracts and other related business development activities." K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (C).

The Community Relations Committee "recommend[s] methods for educating concerned communities and the public at large on the work of the Commission and King County in advancing human and civil rights for all in the region and shall establish liaison with other regional and civil rights commissioners." K.C.C. Section 3.10.050 (D).

In January 2003, Hu Sims was elected Chair, Christine Landon was elected Vice Chair and Kim Nguyen was elected as an at-large member of the Executive Committee, all to take effect on January 15, 2003. During this year, the Commission, under Hu Sims' leadership, accomplished a significant number of achievements. They include:

<u>Performing Other Relating and Necessary Activities In The Interest Of Ensuring an Effective County Human and Civil Rights Commission:</u>

- ▶ During 2003, the Commission continued its series of "Conversation" presentations whereby the Commission engaged in dialogues with community organization representatives on issues of concern to King County's ethnic, racial, gender and disability communities, in order to develop a more cohesive, culturally sensitive and educated Commission. Presenters included Joy Shigaki, Japanese American Citizen's League; Ellen Abellera, Executive Director, WA State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs; Suzanne Thomas, noted attorney on civil rights issues Facing Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Communities; Kush Bambrah, Associate Director of the Hate Free Zone Campaign of WA on the Hate Free Zone and Immigrant Issues in King County; and Sarah Luthen and Bill DuBay of the Coalition for Enforceable Discrimination Laws (CEDL) on the Proposed Equal Benefits Ordinance.
- In March, the Commission listened to a presentation by Councilmember Larry Phillips, Chair of the Council Budget Committee, on the County budgeting process. This better acquainted the Commission with how County programs and projects were funded.
- ➤ In April, the Commission listened to a Presentation by Alex Wiggins on Police/Community Relations "Bridging the Gap": Wiggins, a former Seattle Police Officer who is currently a consultant on police/community relations, noted there were problems with outreach to and communication with Communities of Color by police departments in this region.
- ➤ In July, Roxanne Vierra, Office of Civil Rights, gave an overview of fair housing laws and reviewed the differences between jurisdictions on fair housing protected classes.
- ➤ In September, October and November, the Commissioners participated in a series of internal discussions on Race and Race Relations while viewing the 3 video "RACE the Power of an Illusion" video series.

Review And Make Recommendations On Legislation, Public Rules And/Or Policies Related To Any Of The County's Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Disability Access And Minority And Women's Business Utilization Programs:

Resolution in Support of Civil and Human Rights of All US Citizens and Residents of the U.S.:

On March 19th, 2003 the Commission authorized a resolution calling "on all Americans to respect and protect the civil and human rights of all our fellow citizens and residents of the United States during this time of war between the Coalition Forces and the nation of Iraq" and to "call upon our fellow citizens, residents and all governmental officials of King County to continue to respect and protect the civil and human rights of all people, with a pledge to prevent a war abroad from becoming an excuse for injustice at home."

Executive Policy Prohibiting inquiry of Immigration Status by County Employees in Provision of Services:

In May 2003, the full Commission approved a draft of a proposed Executive Order that would establish a prohibition for inquiries by County employees and officials into the immigration status of individuals seeking access to County services, except when required by law or court order. Commissioners believed that in order to fulfill the County goal of "promot[ing] the health, safety and well being of our communities", the County must be a place where all of its residents can be sure that they will receive equal access to services, no matter their place of national origin or immigration status.

The draft executive order was developed after a meeting with Pramila Jayapal, Kush Bambrah, and Melissa Bailey, of the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington and Anita Sinha, an attorney with the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. The policy was forwarded to the Executive and he adopted in on May 30, 2003.

Review and Recommendations for Enhancing Opportunities for Utilization and Participation of Minority and Women Businesses on County Contracts and Other Related Business Development Activities

➤ The Commission did not have any recommendations in this area in 2003.

Educating Concerned Communities and the Public at Large on the Work of the Commission and King County

- <u>Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Celebration & Essay Contest:</u> The students selected were: Monica Thomas, Washington Middle School, Seattle School District, first prize winner of \$100; Cassie Lear from Washington Middle School, Seattle School District, second prize winner of \$75 and Supriti Jaya Ghosh of Washington Middle School, Seattle School District, and third prize winner of \$50. The Commission Administrator again represented the Commission on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Planning Committee.
- Co-sponsored Two Day Seattle Race Conference: The Commission was invited to be a co-sponsor of this event, designed to begin to create a shared understanding and language about the nature of racism, its modern day forms and the tools that can be used to end it, and to activate a "movement" for racial justice in Seattle that includes sustainable action components. Two Commissioners, Hu Sims and Kim Nguyen, as well as the Commission Administrator, Paula Harris-White, served on the planning committee. The actual conference took place in January 2003 and the Commission presented a Workshop on Discrimination in Healthcare with the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health.
- Co-Sponsored "Civil Liberties Violated: 1942 & Today" with JACL: The Seattle Chapter of the Japanese American Citizen's League invited the King County Civil Rights Committee to join them in co-sponsoring and planning "Civil Liberties Violated: 1942 & Today". This community forum was held in honor of Asian Pacific Heritage Month to "hear stories from local Japanese Americans on their experiences during WWII as well recent accounts from local Arab American, South Asian Americans and Muslim Community members."
- Co-Sponsored Racial Profiling Roundtable: Along with the ACLU, the Arab-American Community Coalition, Asian Counseling & Referral Service, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, JACL, the Sikh Coalition and the UW Asian American Students Union, the Commission co-sponsored the "Racial Profiling Roundtable: The Asian American Experience" on May 31. The purpose of this event was to educate Asian communities about how they are impacted by racial profiling, to build coalitions and to create a sustainable plan to address these issues.
- Relationship with King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO): In 2003, the Commission continued to have a positive working relationship with the King County Sheriff's Office, due to the efforts of Chief Fabienne Brooks, who acts as a liaison between the KCSO and the Commission. The Commission Administrator and two Commissioners attended KCSO focus groups on recruitment of service-oriented commissioned officers and offered to help the KCSO with outreach to their communities to bring in more diverse points of view. Four Commissioners, Hu Sims, Barbara Hurst, Kim Nguyen and Kris Meilahn, participated in a pilot

- Study Circles series of meeting with three KCSO staff members. Commissioner Christine Landon attended the KCSO Citizen's Academy (April-June 2003) and went on a KCSO/Shoreline Police Department Ride-along.
- Participated in the Wing Luke Museum Race Talk Potlucks: The Wing Luke Museum invited community members to participate in a series of "Race Talk Potlucks" in preparation for an exhibit titled "Beyond Talk: Redrawing Race in Seattle". The exhibit was designed to strengthen relationship-building between and among communities and result in an exhibit that will give concrete expressions to race.
- Provided Facilitation of Community Dialogues on Race: The Commission Administrator acted as a facilitator for the Seattle Chamber of Commerce Urban Enterprise Center's "It's Time to Talk" dialogues and also for the Girl Scouts – Totem Council's first Forums on Race dialogue.
- Co-Sponsored 2003 Hate Crimes Conference: The Commission was a co-sponsor, along with OCA, JACL and numerous other community organizations, of a conference on hate crimes on October 2003. The goal was to educate the community about hate crimes, how to report it, what laws cover it and how to improve law enforcement's response to it.
- Co-Sponsored an Affirmative Action Community Forum: In November 2003, the Commission joined with The JACL to sponsor "Affirmative Action Community Forum. Breaking Myths, Moving Forward". More than 200 people attended this forum which was designed to educate the community on the status of affirmative action in this region.
- Commissioners and the Commission Administrator met and/or networked with the following community organizations during 2003:
 - 1. Urban Enterprise Center Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
 - 2. Organization of Chinese Americans of Greater Seattle
 - 3. Japanese American Citizen's League Seattle Chapter
 - 4. Japanese American Citizen's League Lake Washington Chapter
 - 5. The American Civil Liberties Union
 - 6. Committee to Undue Racism Everywhere (CURE)
 - 7. Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle
 - 8. NAACP Seattle Branch
 - 9. Washington State Human Rights Commission
 - 10. Seattle Human Rights Commission
 - 11. Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington
 - 12. Seattle Office of Civil Rights
 - 13. Asian Resource Center (ARC)
 - 14. WA State PFLAG Convention

- 15. Seattle Race Conference Planning & Steering Committee
- 16. King County Labor Council
- 17. Wing Luke Asian Museum
- 18. Seattle Art Museum
- 19. Girl Scouts -Totem Council
- 20. Arab-American Community Coalition
- 21. Asian Counseling & Referral Service
- 22. Asian Pacific Islander Coalition
- 23. Sikh Coalition
- 24. UW Asian American Students Union

Establish Liaison with Other Regional and Civil Rights Commissioners:

Participation in Annual Human Rights Day Observance: The Commission continued as a co-sponsor for the Eighth Annual Seattle Human Rights Day Celebration. This year's keynote speaker, Sherman J. Alexie, Jr., noted Northwest novelist and poet.. Roy G. Farrell, MD, National President of the Physicians for Social Responsibility, and Rita Zawaideh, an advocate for Arab American civil rights issues, were given the Distinguished Citizens Awards for Human Rights 2003. The event was free and featured other entertainment and light refreshments. It was wheelchair accessible and was sign language interpreted.

Administrative:

- This year there was an appointment of one new Commissioner: Kris Meilahn in District 3. There are still vacancies in Districts 6, 8, 11, 12 and 13; Justin Patrick Walsh was nominated for the District 5 position in December.
- The Commission decided to merge the Public Policy Committee and the Economic Development Committee, due to the number of Commissioners on the Commission and the overlapping responsibilities of the committees, into a single committee, the Committee of the Whole. This committee meets every month, two weeks before the full Commission meeting.
- In April 2003, the Administrator for the Commission took on the additional responsibility of staffing the Employee-based EEO/AA Advisory Committee, and now provides staffing to three civil rights/affirmative action focused bodies in the County.